

**PIERCE COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD**

February 26, 2003
4:30 p.m. – 6:02 p.m.

Present: Arlee Colyar, Board Chair
Darrell Harlow, Board Member
Anna Caldwell, Board Member
Nina Cogswell, Board Member

Excused: Chris Dardis, Vice Chair
Dan Fruichantie, Board Member
Louis Caldwell, Board Member
Harvey Hogle, Board Member
La Neva Swann, Board Member

Absent: Gail Fink, Board Member
John Fisher, Member-at-Large
Andrea Stephenson, Board Member

Staff: Diana Fitschen, Operations Coordinator
Dave Stewart, Crisis/Corrections Coordinator
Doug Crandall, Children's/Quality Improvement Coordinator
Jo Moore, Behavioral Health Administrator, PSBH
Stephen Greene, Care Manager, Pierce County RSN
Becki Foutz, Office Assistant

Guests: Karen Wild, Comprehensive Mental Health, Supervisor, PATH
Mark Gilbert, Team Leader, PATH
Ed Hamill, Metropolitan Development Council
Kurt Bolton, Metropolitan Development Council
Jerry Burtt, Comprehensive Mental Health
Jodi Dumont, Pierce County AIDS Foundation
Patty Spaulding, Catholic Community Services,
Diana Long, Director, Women's New Life Program, Tacoma Rescue Mission
Julie Krippner, Nativity House
Eddie Hamilton, Interested Citizen

MINUTES

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	ACTION
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CALL TO ORDER

Arlee Colyar	The February meeting of the Pierce County Mental Health Advisory Board was called to order at 4:35 p.m. by Arlee Colyar.	Informational.
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INTRODUCTIONS

All	All Board members, staff, and guests introduced themselves.	Informational.
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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

PIERCE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES

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Arlee Colyar Darrell Harlow Nina Cogswell	Arlee asked for a motion to approve the January minutes. Darrell moved that the minutes be approved as written. Nina seconded the motion.	The motion passed unanimously.
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PATH PUBLIC HEARING

Stephen Greene	Stephen introduced the PATH presenters. Comprehensive Mental Health has managed the PATH (Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness) for 14 years. The state looks to them as an outstanding model of outreach and case management for the homeless.	Informational.
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Karen Wild	In April 1989, five agencies formed a consortium and obtained federal grants to begin the PATH program. The focus is outreach. They are mandated to make 30 contacts a month, to house 45 people a year and to engage over 24 people in mental health treatment. Due to dwindling resources in the community, this is becoming harder to accomplish. Karen and the other outreach workers go out into the community, to homeless camps, under bridges. They also go into taverns and convenience stores, inquiring about homeless individuals and distributing updated resource lists.	
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Many homeless individuals are not interested in services and do not want to be identified, and their rights are respected. Relationships are built and trust is earned slowly until some of them are engaged in services. Karen commented that there is an increase in drugs, violence and prostitution that she hasn't seen in over 20 years.

Mark Gilbert	Mark explained that there are so many people on the street involved with drug trafficking that half his job is to ferret out those who are mentally ill and need help. Two outreach workers cover 1700 square miles of Pierce County, approaching homeless camps with Red Cross medical/hygiene kits.	Informational.
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Kurt Bolton	<p>Kurt spends two days a week at the Tacoma Rescue Mission. An example success story was a gentleman on the street who, outreach workers discovered, had veteran's benefits so they were able to help him get temporary housing at the domiciliary at the VA hospital. They also helped him to obtain GAU benefits, and he is now in clean and sober housing and has an attorney. Many consumers are assisted in getting into drug and/or alcohol treatment but since they do not always receive long-term housing, they don't "count" towards PATH mandated numbers.</p>	Informational.
<p>Darrell Harlow Karen Wild Mark Gilbert</p>	<p>Darrell asked what could be done about those who prey on the mentally ill by taking their money or taking advantage of their generosity and causing them to be evicted from their housing and lose their Section 8 benefits. Karen said PATH is working with Tacoma Police Department to try to cut down on victimization, through committees and sting operations. They also work with the two Housing Authorities. Everyone has the right to safe housing. She is working on a project to acquire groups of apartments specifically for the mentally ill. Mark added that this was a system problem, as there are fewer police patrolling the streets despite increased crime.</p>	
Patty Spaulding	<p>Patty explained that due to a federal budget cut, Pierce County Housing Authority lost 80 units of Section 8 housing. She develops relationships with landlords to encourage them to accept high-risk tenants. To procure housing through the Phoenix program, perspective tenants must schedule and attend an interview, pass a Washington Patrol background check, have at least five months of sobriety and be willing to participate in groups. Families may stay at the mobile shelter for up to six months and in transitional housing for up to two years. Five families at a time are housed at the shelter located at 7050 South G Street (formerly St. Ann's School).</p>	Informational.

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Anna Caldwell Karen Wild Mark Gilbert	Anna asked if there has been an increase in the homeless population since the many lay-offs recently due to budget cuts. Karen said that the Homeless Count was held last month but the results are not in yet. Mark explained that many people on SSI cannot afford rent. Others they see are working homeless who are felons so can't get into housing. Kurt added that the State plans to cut two to four thousand from GAU. Due to dwindling resources, safe affordable housing is gone. Pierce County leads the state in violent crime. Gangs from California have returned to dominate the Hilltop area.	Informational.
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Anna Caldwell Karen Wild Kurt Bolton	Anna asked about clean and sober housing. There are 30 to 40 clean and sober houses in Pierce County, but they are not regulated by the State. Kurt pointed out that if tenants use drugs or alcohol, they are immediately evicted and their rent money is not returned. Treatment and groups are not always available at clean and sober houses. Many people on the streets are getting into treatment and staying out of the hospital through the PATH program.	
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STAFF REPORTS

Doug Crandall Anna Caldwell	Doug distributed copies of the working agreement between PCRSN and DSHS DCFS (Division of Children and Family Services). The state has asked Divisions to define their working relationships. Anna asked if there was an increase in teenagers in services. Doug explained that was difficult to say as the system is seeing fewer clients due to the budget cuts. The next round of cuts may eliminate Family Reconciliation Services. It's becoming more and more challenging. There has been an increase noted in the number of younger children in services.	If there are any questions or comments about the working agreement, please contact Doug.
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Jo Moore	It's been two and a half years since PSBH has been under County ownership. The facility has passed a lot of surveys and has acquired all necessary accreditations and certifications, but is having financial difficulties. This week 27 staff people will be laid off. Tough but wise clinical decisions have been made and hopefully the reductions will turn around the financial situation. The remaining staff will be working twice as hard. PSBH is a major component of the continuum of care offered by the RSN.	Informational.
Diana Long Jo Moore Dave Stewart	Diana said that there seems to be an increase in the number of people walking the streets in the vicinity of PSBH appearing to be hallucinating or under the influence of drugs. Jo and Dave encouraged Diana to call the Mobile Outreach Crisis Team in these cases.	
Dave Stewart	The bed reduction plans at Western State Hospital continue. Pierce County now has access to only 183 beds, a large decrease from the 237 we had at this time last year. We are routinely five or six over target and will incur fines if the entire hospital census goes over. They have closed the front door; consumers are waiting as long as two weeks to gain admission to WSH. The RSN is working diligently with providers to monitor bed usage.	
Dave Stewart	This legislative session is different than those of the past. Dave attended a mental health forum sponsored by King County RSN, where legislators stated that nothing that cost money would be considered. Mental health will be cut the same as everyone else. The House (HB 1978) and Senate both are considering bills that propose creating an independent office of Mental Health Ombuds. Stephanie Keck, the PCRSN Ombuds, is a very effective voice with the local consumers. The RSN opposes this bill, sponsored by Senator Kastama.	Informational.
Dave Stewart	House Bill 1041 proposes a process for mental health consumers to create legal advanced directives allowing them unhindered access to court hearings to make determinations of incapacity. This would be burdensome to the court system.	Informational.

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	<p>The Mental Health Division is sponsoring a bill to change the competency evaluation process, mandating that they all take place in the jails. Many times those who need evaluations are best served in hospitals, not jails. Last year 50% of the competency evaluations were conducted at the jail.</p> <p>The parity bill is still before the legislature and the RSN continues to support it, but it's not likely to pass because it would require money.</p> <p>Several bills before the legislature seek to raise the age of consent for voluntary mental health treatment for minors, from 13 to 16. This is a concern for outpatient services particularly.</p> <p>There is a change in the Children's Mental Health Act: for a minor who's admitted for an inpatient stay, if they request to leave against medical advice, they may be held for up to two judicial days. Current law states that they are to be released immediately upon their request, and this is not always safe for the child.</p>	
<p>Eddie Hamilton Dave Stewart</p>	<p>Eddie asked about the status of the prevalence study. The RSN hopes that the study may help to change the decision about closing more WSH beds. Eddie is going to speak with his legislator about it. He thanked the RSN for their diligent efforts.</p>	<p>Informational.</p>
	<p>There is an April hearing set to determine state liability in the TANF lawsuit. The damage hearing is set for July.</p>	
<p>Diana Fitschen</p>	<p>The outpatient world has been faced with another budget reduction. The RSN had to trim \$1.1 million to get through this biennium. The reduction was split among the RSN, Catholic Community Services, and the core service agencies. The proposed budgets are being watched closely in order to prepare for the next biennium in advance.</p>	<p>Discussion.</p>

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

<p>Diana Fitschen</p>	<p>Darrell and Chris will be contacted this month to schedule MH Advisory Board applicant interviews.</p>	<p>Informational.</p>
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OLD BUSINESS

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Darrell Harlow	Darrell requested that his attendance status for the last meeting be changed from "absent" to "excused". He was in the hospital unexpectedly during the last meeting time.	The change will be made.
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NEW BUSINESS

Diana Fitschen Arlee Colyar	The current MHAB officers, Chair, Arlee Colyar, Vice-Chair, Chris Dardis and Member-at-Large John Fisher have been contacted. All are willing to serve another term in their respective offices. This will be voted on at the next meeting.	Informational.
	Arlee reported that she is getting married on March 22nd and will be on her honeymoon during the next meeting time.	Congratulations Arlee!
	Dan Fruichantie broke his leg recently and the members signed a get-well card to be sent to him.	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Arlee Colyar	The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.	Informational.
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The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2003 at 4:30 p.m. in the Human Services Boardroom.
Respectfully submitted,

Becki Foutz
Office Assistant

HANDOUTS

The following information/handouts were distributed and are maintained on file at Pierce County Human Services:

- Agenda
- PATH Resource List
- Minutes from Prior Meeting
- Working Agreement between PCRSN and DCFS
- PATH Project Handout